

Memo to Col. Grogan:

Herewith is draft memo for DCI on the OSS films and other records in the National Archives, together with excerpts from their published guides and catalogs in which OSS material is publicized.

As a byproduct of my survey at the National Archives last Tuesday, in cooperation with the DDS Records Management Staff <sup>25X1A</sup> ~~(b)(7)(D)~~, I would like to recommend that the appropriate officials in CIA undertake further studies and action as follows:

1. That the Records Management Staff negotiate with the National Archives for the return of the three CIA-controlled OSS files to CIA custody (to be followed by the deletion of whatever publicity can feasibly be done), in order to avoid future public inquiries and possible administrative embarrassment between CIA and the National Archives <sup>and the public,</sup> and in order to restore these three fragmentary files to the main historical collections in CIA and thus improve both security control and operating efficiency.

2. That someone in CIA negotiate with State/OIR, similarly, for the transfer of the 8 State-controlled OSS files (now in National Archives) to CIA, where they would be <sup>separately but centrally</sup> housed in the CIA Archives Center, for similar reasons of security control and operating efficiency, and also to remove the present divided responsibility for handling public inquiries about OSS records.

3. That the State Department be encouraged <sup>similarly,</sup> to undertake future transfers of OSS historical records, not to the National Archives but to the CIA Archives Center, under whatever controls are appropriate and mutually agreeable in any given case.

4. That <sup>the proper officials in</sup> CIA undertake to recover the other miscellaneous fragments of

OSS records which have been alienated from the main collections, including (when appropriate)

those in the custody of General Donovan.

<sup>WPC</sup>  
M.P.C.

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Memorandum for the Director

Subject: Public Inquiries about OSS Historical Records in the National Archives

1. This memorandum is for information only.

2. Over a number of years since September 1945, when OSS was terminated and its functions and records were divided between the State Department and the Strategic Services Unit (SSU), several minor parts of the accumulated records of OSS have from time to time been transferred by each of these two liquidating agencies to the National Archives. Eleven such transfers have been accomplished to date: three files, transferred by SSU (that is, by CIG or OA), between 1946 and 1948, before CIA established its own Records Center, and the other eight files, transferred by the State Department between 1946 and 1951. Attached herewith (Annex A) is a descriptive inventory of virtually the entire deposit (ten of the eleven accessions), prepared in 1951 by the National Archives and classified Secret. *Also attached (Annexes B and C) are briefs,* ~~briefs~~ unclassified summaries of all eleven accessions, which have from time to time been publicized by the National Archives in its published guides and public catalogs; ~~see Annexes B and C.~~

3. Meanwhile, the main bulk of ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> records of OSS operational, intelligence, and support activities have remained divided between SSU (that is, under DDP/FI control, in the R&S Building) and the State Department (under OIR control). There are also a number of fragmentary files of OSS records in the custody of other U.S. government agencies, according to a survey of World War II records made by the National Archives <sup>in 1947</sup> and published in 1951 (see Annex B, pp. 7-8). In addition, General Donovan is said to have some OSS records in his personal possession in his home in New York City.

4. The three CIA-controlled <sup>OSS</sup> files of ~~OSS~~ in the custody of the National Archives are as follows:

a. Five motion pictures, 1942-45, produced by the OSS Field Photo Branch; 35 reels in volume. These films are described in detail in the public catalog in the National Archives; see excerpts, in Annex C. Apparently ~~these~~

these films were all unclassified at the time when they were offered to the National Archives by SSU, in November 1945. ~~At present, however, prints of three and they are so regarded by the National Archives.~~ <sup>cataloged</sup> ~~However, it appears that~~ <sup>other prints of</sup> three of these films (in the custody of CIA/OCR/Graphics Register) are, ~~however,~~ variously classified as "Confidential" and "US Official Use Only". ~~In the~~ <sup>(extended to about</sup> Original offer to the National Archives by SSU ~~some 650 reels, various other~~ <sup>and</sup> including (a) certain duplicates, which were intended by SSU for the Library of Congress, and (b) a considerable number of captured films (summarized in <sup>Annex A, p. 10;</sup> Annex B, pp. 1, 7), which sometime <sup>after 1951</sup> were transferred from CIA control to the control of the State Department, USIA, and <sup>the</sup> Alien Property Custodian. In any case, ~~these~~ <sup>(the presently in question)</sup> films are only a small part of the OSS film archives: other parts are <sup>said to be</sup> in the custody of the Army, the Navy, ~~and~~ OCR/Graphics Register, and other government agencies.

b. Property records of various OSS field installations, 1942-45. This is a bulky file (about 443 linear feet in volume), retired to the National Archives by SSU/CIG in April 1947. It contains requisitions, purchase orders, and similar papers relating to OSS procurement of <sup>property</sup>, equipment, supplies, and services. There have never been any public inquiries about this file, <sup>(SO)</sup> ~~and~~ it is understood from the National Archives official in charge of that file. <sup>Apparently both the National Archives and CIA Records Management Staff informally</sup> c. Correspondence files of the OSS Pictorial Records Section, including

its Washington and New York Offices, 1942-45; about 33 linear feet in bulk. The Pictorial Records Section was part of the OSS Research and Analysis Branch, and is apparently an "ancestor" of the present Graphics Register, OCR/CIA. Actually this file was part of the OSS ~~R&A~~ <sup>archives</sup> record collection which ~~was~~ <sup>were</sup> inherited by the State Department in 1945. Subsequently, however, ~~they~~ <sup>(in turn)</sup> ~~the~~ file was transferred <sup>by State</sup> to CIA, and in May 1948 it was offered by ~~CIA~~ <sup>in turn</sup> to the National Archives. ~~For published references to this file, see Annex B, pp.~~

*For a summary of*  
~~details about~~ this file, see Annex A, pp. 3, 5 ; for published references to it, see Annex B, pp. 4, 7. There have never been any public inquiries about

this file at the National Archives, <sup>so</sup> it is understood *from the* Archivist *official in charge.*

4. There has never been any secrecy about the existence of these eleven ~~file~~ OSS files <sup>on</sup> ~~in~~ deposited in the National Archives, nor about CIA's relationship to SSU ~~as the agent liquidating agent for~~ as the agency which participated in the <sup>transferred</sup> offered three of these files to the National Archives.

These facts are all revealed in the unclassified inter-agency agreements and correspondence covering those transfers, which are on file in the National Archives and available for public inspection by interested, bonafide students. Furthermore, from time to time the National Archives has <sup>routinely publicized</sup> ~~issued routine publicity~~ about these OSS files, <sup>published</sup> ~~in~~ in general terms, in its several guides (see Annex B), and the five motion pictures are analyzed in detail in its master public catalog of historical films (see Annex C). <sup>715.</sup> Actual access by the public to the OSS material itself is, however, carefully controlled, in accordance with various restrictions imposed on the records by the State Department, CIG/CIA, and the Archivist of the United States. While there are minor inconsistencies in these restriction policies, as they have been <sup>announced</sup> ~~published~~ by the National Archives (see Annex D), all public inquiries are, in fact, customarily referred by the National Archives for final decision either to the State Department or to CIA, whichever agency exercises access control over a given OSS file. While public interest in the CIA-controlled material has been limited, thus far, to the <sup>five</sup> ~~motion picture~~ pictures, <sup>noted above,</sup> <sup>public</sup> ~~interest~~ there has been a considerable interest in a number of the State-controlled <sup>OSS</sup> ~~intelligence~~ files, so <sup>it is understood from</sup> ~~we have been told by~~ the National Archives official in charge of these records.

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